

Introduction To Second Edition

This edition to the *Physician's Guide* has been developed by the Industrial Medical Council to continue the mission set forth in the first *Physician's Guide* which is to assist physicians in understanding the many complexities within the California workers' compensation system.

This guide will hopefully provide you with a basic understanding of the key concepts and issues affecting physicians who practice in the system and will offer some helpful illustrations in these areas. Some of these issues, such as apportionment, continue to confound even the most experienced practitioners.

Also, many changes, which directly affect the physician, have been visited on the workers' compensation system since the first edition appeared in such areas as report writing, time frames, referrals, advertising, disclosures and the like. This edition provides new information and helpful case examples on each of these areas.

The guide is divided into eight chapters with an expansive appendix, including the most commonly used IMC and DWC forms, as well as an updated resource list. Chapter 8 includes some of the more commonly asked questions about the medical-legal evaluation process. Remember that, although the system itself is always changing, the physician's role in the system stays constant - treating and evaluating injured workers with objective conclusions and ratable reports.

Please remember that the *Physician's Guide* is not intended to replace your clinical judgment nor to offer legal advice. We realize that many of the laws covered in this edition are being litigated almost daily and, in some, cases, even reasonable minds differ as to their meaning. Nonetheless, we do hope that you use the guide as an educational tool to supplement your professional experience and come to rely on it whenever you need a quick reference check or simply wish to review areas which may not be so familiar to you.